# Reed Canary Grass
## *(Phalaris arundinacea)*

**Description:** Reed canary grass is a large, coarse grass that reaches 2 to 9 feet in height. It has an erect, hairless stem with gradually tapering leaf blades 3 1/2 to 10 inches long and 1/4 to 3/4 inch in width. Blades are flat and have a rough texture on both surfaces. The lead ligule is membranous and long. The compact panicles are erect or slightly spreading (depending on the plant's reproductive stage), and range from 3 to 16 inches long with branches 2 to 12 inches in length. Single flowers occur in dense clusters in May to mid-June. They are green to purple at first and change to beige over time. Roots spread extensively by creeping rhizomes and runners.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Reed canary grass is a cool-season, sod-forming, perennial wetland grass native to temperate regions of Europe, Asia, and North America. The Eurasian ecotype has been selected for its vigor and has been planted throughout the U.S. since the 1800's for forage and erosion control. It has become naturalized in much of the northern half of the U.S., and is still being planted on steep slopes and banks of ponds and created wetlands.

**HABITAT:** Reed canary grass can grow on dry soils in upland habitats and in the partial shade of oak woodlands, but does best on fertile, moist organic soils in full sun. This species can invade most types of wetlands, including marshes, wet prairies, sedge meadows, fens, stream banks, and seasonally wet areas; it also grows in disturbed areas such as bergs and spoil piles.

Methods of control: Reed canary grass is difficult to eradicate; no single control method is universally applicable. In natural communities, mechanical control practices are recommended. In buffer areas and in severely disturbed sites, chemical and mechanical controls may be used. If herbicide is used, care should be taken to prevent contact with non-target species. Any control technique to reduce or eliminate reed canary grass should be followed by planting native species adapted to the site.

**Reference:** http://www.angelfire.com/on2/EVS/reedcanarygrass.html